

MEMORANDUM

13 November 2018

FROM: PERS-432G (VFA JO DETAILER)

TO: FLEET VFA JUNIOR OFFICERS

SUBJ: FIRST SHORE TOUR SLATING PROCESS

1) Introduction.

- a) Congratulations on the completion of your Fleet JO tour! I am the VFA JO Detailer and look forward to working with you as you make the transition to your first shore tour. As your Detailer, I am your advocate for future orders.
- b) I encourage you to seek out senior aircrew within your air wing to gain perspective on the different options available for your shore tour. There are likely alumni from the FRS, VX, SFTI, TRACOM and TPS communities among the CO/XOs, Department Heads and Training Officers in your air wing. Their vast breadth of experience can provide excellent background for your follow-on tour.

2) The slate process.

- a) Three times a year (December, April and August), first tour JOs are slated based on Planned Rotation Date (PRD). Table 1 outlines when PRD groups are slated. When practical, TPS and SFTI selections are determined prior to the slate. During the slate, the VFA Detailers and VFA Placement Officers review the eligible JO and billet lists and make assignments based on billet availability, aircrew qualification, aircrew preference, FITREP ranking, and needs of the Navy.

PRD GROUP	TPS CLASS	SFTI CLASS	SLATE
APR-JUL	JUL	MAY	DEC
AUG-NOV	JAN	SEP	APR
DEC-MAR	JAN / JUL *	JAN	AUG

Table 1 – Slate Timing

*For FITREP purposes, pilots on the August slate should prioritize the July TPS class because of the 12 week flight training work-up that starts in October prior to the class convening. WSOs don't have a pre-class work-up requirement and can start TPS in a TAD status for a couple weeks in order to stay eligible for the January periodic FITREP.

- b) Your input to the slating process begins with this memo. If you are receiving this memo you should be five to eight months out from your PRD (**your PRD should fall between April and July 2019**). PRDs can be adjusted by your Commanding Officer, so please confirm your

transfer date with your CO/XO before moving forward. Any PRD extension greater than three months will require an official PRD extension request routed through Navy Personnel Command (NPC). Since your slate is based on your PRD, it is important to establish a firm date at the outset of the slating process.

c) The key factors affecting shore duty are availability, preference and FITREP.

(1) Availability. The number of billets per command will NOT be disclosed prior to the slate.

(2) Preference. It is very important to submit a full, ranked preference list to your Detailer. Be sure to include LSO and FAC(A) qualifications expected prior to your PRD as well as any amplifying personal information (e.g. family issues, EFM, military co-location) that the Detailer should be aware of during the slating process. I am your advocate, and the more information you can provide me will help us work out the orders you want. **The Excel spreadsheet that accompanies this memo provides the format required for submitting your request.**

(3) FITREP. Once the slate group is finalized, members will be ranked based on their high water FITREP. CO recommendations, submitted preferences and aircraft / LSO / FAC(A) qualifications will also impact the ranking and order writing process.

d) Orders notification. Once the slate has been approved at NPC, your Skipper will be notified of the results.

e) The goal is to have your slate finalized by the end of December.

3) Shore tour opportunities.

a) Naval Aviation prioritizes production billets for your first shore tour, defined as any flying job which contributes to the support and manning of the VFA community. Table 2 lists generic production commands (* = pilot only). **Production jobs available for your slate are on the drop down menu on the Excel spreadsheet that accompanies this memo.**

NAWDC (N5)	VT Pensacola (VT-86)	VFC-12*
VFA-122	VT Kingsville*	VFC-13*
VFA-106	VT Meridian*	VFC-111*
SFTI	VX-9	VFA-125 (JSF)*
TPS	VX-9 DET Edwards (JSF)*	
Table 2 – Generic Production Commands		

b) Individual commands for Test Pilot School (TPS) and TOPGUN graduates (SFTI) are not listed in Table 2 since there is a separate application and slating process for these billets. **SFTI applications are due November 23. TPS applications for the July class will be due sometime in December 2018. Keep your eyes out for the class message to be released.**

- i) SFTI selections:
 - (1) We will conduct the slate after the results of the SFTI slate are out.
 - (2) With your current command's concurrence, JOs are allowed to apply to SFTI any time **before or after** they are slated, so long as the results of the next SFTI selection are released prior to execution of ANY form of funding from their pending orders (PCS, HHG move, advance DLA, etc). Once orders are executed, the window for SFTI applications closes.
 - (3) SFTI application deadlines and the results of the selections are a bit of a moving target. If a JO plans to apply to SFTI after being slated, they must **contact their detailer immediately** to ensure his current set of orders facilitate delaying their rotation until the results of the SFTI selection are complete.
 - (4) ***The exception to this rule remains those slated to JSF squadrons. If you are slated to a JSF squadron, you cannot apply post-slate to SFTI. This is due to the need to ensure all JSF quotas are met, and no class seats are gapped.**
- ii) TPS selections:
 - (1) **Submitting an application package to TPS will have NO impact on where you are slated.**
 - (2) With your current command's concurrence, JOs are allowed to apply to TPS any time **before or after** they are slated.
 - (3) Unlike SFTI, there is no line of accounting/PCS caveat with multiple TPS applications. However, if a JO plans to apply to TPS after being slated, they must **contact their detailer immediately** to help coordinate detaching dates if/when feasible.
- c) Periodically, non-production billets become available. These include, but are not limited to, the Pilot Exchange Program (PEP), ROTC Instructor billets, Naval Recruiting, base staffs, ONI/SPEAR, OPNAV, OLA and the Naval Safety Center.
 - (1) PEP. This includes billets flying Hornets in Australia, Canada and Switzerland. An exchange tour flying Rhinos in Australia is available for WSOs only. There are billets flying F-15s at Kadena AFB, F-16s at Hill and Luke AFB, A-10s at Davis-Monthan AFB, Rafales in France and billets in England and Scotland flying the Tornado and Typhoon. USAF exchange tours are not required fills and will only be considered when all production billets are manned. PEP tours, even if located in a foreign country or in a deployable unit, are not considered sea duty. Following a PEP tour, you will be up for a disassociated sea tour. Certain PEP tours will be preceded by time at the Defense Language Institute to learn the native language.
 - (2) Other non-production jobs. Availability varies on each slate and is dependent on filling the production requirements. Non-production billets include staff positions within Naval Recruiting, base/wing/flag staffs, the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI), the Naval Safety Center, Office of Legislative Affairs (OLA) and OPNAV billets in Washington D.C. These positions can open up locations not normally

available in the VFA community.

*****If a non-production billet is available, it will be listed on that individual slate's preference spreadsheet.*****

4) Your career.

- a) Prior to submitting your preferences for the slate, it is important to consider the career implications of each option.
 - (1) FRS/TRACOM. Instructor duty is looked upon favorably by the VFA community. Additionally, both the FRS and TRACOM offer the chance to compete with a large summary group, providing the opportunity for excellent FITREP breakouts. FRS and TRACOM billets are both considered due course. FRS billets, however, enable aircrew to maintain FA-18 currency, which makes that officer more competitive for CVW staff and Super JO follow on tour options. FRS billets also tend to be more competitive on selection boards.
 - (2) PEP/Adversary. These options offer tremendous flying opportunities and unique locations and experiences. However, during a PEP tour you will likely be the only U.S. Navy Officer attached to your command, which translates into a non-competitive (1 of 1 EP) FITREP for three years. This can have adverse long-term career implications when you are stacked against your peers in future selection boards. The adversary squadrons vary in the size of their ready rooms, which can help mitigate this issue. VFC-12 typically has only one or two active duty lieutenants and therefore tends to have the same career impact as a PEP tour. VFC-13 and VFC-111 usually have 8 to 12 active duty lieutenants, affording you the opportunity to break out in a larger summary group as well as the opportunity to fly a different type/model/series in a new location.
 - (3) NAWDC/VX. Both of these options offer tactical and challenging flying opportunities with large ready rooms (read: competitive FITREPs). These billets also enable aircrew to maintain FA-18 currency which could make that officer more competitive for flying second sea tours.
 - (4) SFTI/TPS. Both have excellent flying and education opportunities as well as large summary groups. There is a separate application process which is delineated in the application message. The selection process determines which command you will go to. Application deadlines are released via Navy Message. Please start a dialogue early with your front office and myself if you have questions.
 - (a) SFTI begins with a 13-week graduate level education in Strike Fighter Tactics at the United States Navy Fighter Weapons School in Fallon, NV and continues with instructor duty at SFWSPAC, SFWSLANT, VX-9, TOPGUN, N5 or an FRS. SFTI shore duty and followed by a 24-month Training Officer tour in the fleet. Also, there is a two year GREEMAIN upon conclusion of your shore tour to ensure fulfillment of the Training Officer obligation. Talk to your Training Officer and XO/CO about options and timing. There are three TOPGUN classes each fiscal

year: September, January and May.

- (b) TPS begins with a one-year course of study at the Navy, Air Force, or overseas Test Pilot School. After TPS, aircrew will execute a 24-36 month tour at VX-23, VX-9 or VX-31. Pilots selected for TPS expect to be sent on a 12-week flight training workup prior to the TPS class convening date. Check your timing with the Detailer prior to filling out an application. Table 1 depicts TPS class based on PRD group.

- 5) I hope that this has answered some questions and provided baseline guidance for your follow-on tour preferences. Please call or email me with any questions or concerns; I'm glad to discuss your options. Fly safe and enjoy the rest of your first fleet tour!

Very respectfully,

LCDR Greg "Bogey" Valdez
Pers 432G Strike Fighter Detailer